



United States Department of the Interior  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
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Washington, D.C. 20240

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**TECHNICAL BULLETIN**

To: Regional Concession Chiefs

From: Chief, Commercial Services Program /s/ *Brian Borda*

Subject: Recession of Disposable Water Bottle Reduction Program

Policy Memorandum 11-03 which established the Disposable Water Bottle Reduction Program was discontinued through an NPS News Release issued August 16, 2017. The change is effective immediately. This technical bulletin provides guidance to parks related to handling the discontinuation of the program.

**Action to be taken: Park-required Programs**

Concessioners currently prohibited from selling bottled water should be notified immediately that they are permitted to resume the sale of bottled water. Bottled water elimination programs that are implemented as contract required elements of a better offer must also be rescinded.

Parks should immediately advise concessioners of the change via a memo or email. Operating plans, merchandise plans, and other contract documentation must be modified by the park to remove references to prohibitions on the sale of bottled water. However, completion of such formal changes to contract documents is not necessary before concessioners may resume bottled water sales. Copies of any applicable documents should be added to the concession contract administrative file.

Parks may not prohibit the sale of bottled water by concessioners as a requirement in any new contract. Disposable water bottle reduction programs should also not be considered as a scored element of a better offer and then adopted as a requirement in any new contracts.

**Actions to be taken: Concessioner-initiated Programs**

Concessioners may opt not to sell bottled water as a business decision after consultation with the park. Such decisions may be made as part of the concessioner's environmental stewardship program or for other business reasons. Concessioners may make such a decision at any time during the term of their contract. This allowance to independently establish their own program

extends to concessioners previously prohibited from selling these products under a park program, but no longer subject to the requirement as a result of the NPS program's recession.

Concessioners must consult with the park before eliminating the sale of bottled water so the park can ensure that adequate hydration options are available to ensure visitor safety. This decision should be documented in the park's concession contract administrative file.

### **Pricing of Water in Disposable Plastic Bottles**

Bottled water is classified as visitor convenience item. Parks should approve pricing for these items using the mark-up method in accordance with the procedures outlined in the 2017 Rate Administration Guide. Prices must be approved prior to beginning sales.

### **Installing Water Refilling Stations**

The rescission of the disposable water bottle reduction program does not prohibit parks or concessioners from installing and operating water bottle refill stations. Any such equipment installation must follow all applicable planning and approval requirements. In particular, this includes appropriate review and approval of any concessioner-installed refill stations.

### **Educating Visitors on Hydration Options**

In those locations where bottled water is sold by a concessioner but other hydration options exist, i.e., water refill stations, parks may encourage concessioners to provide educational materials at the disposable water bottle point of sale or other locations. These materials may inform visitors about the availability of other hydration options such as the refill stations and their associated environmental benefits to the park, such as waste reduction.

### **Technical Bulletin Distribution**

Please distribute this memorandum to parks concession managers in your region. Park concessioner managers are encouraged to share the bulletin with their concessioners.

### **Contact Information**

For further information, contact [Kurt Rausch](#), Branch Chief, Contract Management, Commercial Services Program, at 202-513-7202.